



**Holy Spirit**  
**Lutheran Church**

— E L C I C —

*A Welcoming Christ-Centered Community*

# **2025 Annual Report and 2026 AGM Agenda**

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

to be held

**Sunday, February 22, 2026**

Following worship at 11:30 am

Light lunch provided (free will offering)

**Preamble:** At the 2017 AGM members asked council to bring motions forward moved and seconded to future AGMs. It is more transparent in what the intentions of council are for the AGM and it helps the flow of the meeting. Bringing motions moved into an AGM does not mean they will be passed, rather it allows us to jump right into conversation. These motions can still be amended or voted down. Additions to the agenda or new motions may be added from the floor at the time of "Adoption of Agenda" or when they are germane to the motion under discussion.

## Holy Spirit Lutheran Church Annual General Meeting

### Agenda

Sunday, February 22, 2026



Chair: Karen Oko, President

Recording Secretary: Arvid Pederson

Establish quorum: At least 27 confirmed members must be in attendance.

#### Agenda:

**Motion 1: To open the 2026 HSLC AGM.** Moved and seconded by council.

1. Devotion – Pastor Liz Bell

2. Quorum

3. Adoption of Agenda

**Motion 2: To adopt the 2026 HSLC AGM Agenda.** Moved and seconded by council.

4. AGM Process/Ground Rules

a. Be respectful of others.

b. After being recognized by the chair, the person with the microphone may speak.

c. Speakers with the microphone should be mindful of keeping remarks relevant and concise.

5. Holy Spirit Annual Report for 2025 (excluding the 2026 Budget)

**Motion 3: To receive the 2025 Holy Spirit Annual Report as information.** Moved and seconded by council.

Note: as per HSLC Bylaws Section 3, the minutes of the 2025 AGM were approved on behalf of the congregation by council at the April 14, 2025 council meeting.

6. Presentations - Year in Review

7. New Business

a. Review of financial processes and books for 2025

b. 2025 Financial Report (Belynda Kelleher)

**Motion 4: To approve the 2025 Financial Report.** Moved and seconded by council.

c. Waving of Audit Requirement for 2026

**Motion 5: To waive the requirement for an audit for the 2026 fiscal year as enabled in HSLC Bylaws Section 7 and provide a report on the review of the financial system at AGM 2027 in lieu of an audit.** Moved and seconded by council.

d. 2026 Budget (Belynda Kelleher)

**Motion 6: To approve the 2026 HSLC Budget.** Moved and seconded by council.

8. Nominations and Elections

a. Nominations and Elections for Church Council

b. Election of representatives for Mulhurst, Kuriakos, and Hastings Lake camps.

c. Election of representative for Serenity Funeral Services

d. Acknowledgement of outgoing council members/installation of council

9. Closing Motion: **To close the HSLC 2026 AGM.**

10. The Lord's Prayer and Benediction – Pastor Liz Bell

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### MISSION STATEMENT

Holy Spirit Lutheran Church provides a welcoming and nurturing environment for anyone who chooses to join us in our walk with Jesus. In this walk, we praise God, we cherish community, we strive for justice, and we learn about our faith, our world, and each other. In our shared and individual lives, we are witnesses of God's saving grace, love, and forgiveness through our actions, attitudes, and relationships with others.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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The question that keeps playing in my head is "what is God calling us to do?"

Nothing ever stops at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church. Things keep growing, changing and moving. Holy Spirit is an exciting place to be a part of!

It felt like 2025 moved us to more stability. Pastor Prema prepared us for change and we said a sad goodbye to her in July. In August, we joyfully welcomed Pastor Liz and Jerome. At the same time Darian Neufeld was hired in a new part-time role of Administration Assistant and Communications. We: celebrated Valentine's Day, played at the Engager Rager, had Sunday Service and Picnic in the Park, joined the Pride Parade, welcomed learners back to school, blessed backpacks, had our biggest ever Christmas Market, showed incredible support for Lake Chad, and soooo much more!! And now it is 2026 - and with it we look forward to even more ...

As members of Holy Spirit, we actually ended the year with a small budget surplus!! WOW! Thank you for your perseverance and giving, and thank you God for guiding us to be wise and generous stewards!

But as our giving continues, we have an opportunity for the first time in 10 years to pay down the remaining principal of our mortgage before it is locked in for another 10 years. The more we pay down, the less interest we pay, and the lower our payments will be. This will free up

our budget for other important things! My hope is that we are able to raise extra funds in the very short term so that we can achieve a reduction of our mortgage when we renew it! And then we can choose future directions and priorities!

We noticed a slight decrease (4%) of our average attendance for 2025 while our online attendance is down more (24%), but we are excited to welcome many new families as members in January.

While all this is going on, our committees are committed, vigilant, creative and active, creating new learning opportunities, hosting more fun and lively events, nurturing new members, creating beautiful space for worship, inviting and telling people about all we have going on, encouraging us to be good stewards, and keeping the wheels on the bus ... moving forward!

I thank you for your patience with me as I have muddled through this year - I have learned so much! Huge thank-yous for all the work done by our staff, council, and all of our committees. Together you make Holy Spirit a safe place, and a happening place!

I pray that God will continue to guide us and grow us ... and we will listen and hear what God is calling us to do.

Karen Oko  
Church Council President

## PASTOR'S REPORT

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*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32*

Sometimes it is not until things are good and we feel safe that we are able to relax enough to cry, experience grief, and start to heal.

Holy Spirit Lutheran Church (HSLC) has come through hard times, and you've done that together bravely, creatively, and with a strong faith and trust in God. You had to make heart-breaking decisions and now you are on solid ground. It feels like we are taking a collective deep breath and are ready for whatever God has in mind for us.

If, in this moment, you find yourself feeling something like grief (which can sometimes feel like all the emotions at once crashing in on you like a wave), that is, believe it or not, normal. HSLC is in a stable and healthy place, and some people will only now be able to process stress. As we enter into the fullness of 2026, please be gentle and patient with yourself and others – be ready to give each other an extra dose of grace!

Today, the ministry of HSLC is a vibrant and lively community hub. If you were to poke your head into one of the seven active committees, you would hear laughter, camaraderie, imagination, planning, and a buzz of activity. Ministry here is growing!

Sunday School is filled with energetic and curious children and youth, the choir continues to attract new members, and we begin 2026 financially in the black – a sign of fiscal stability and health. On January 25 we welcomed several new members into the ministry we share. Things are good!

2026 looks bright for HSLC. When I consider you, the members and friends of HSLC, I give thanks to God for you, because God has called you to be part of this dream team of talent, kindness, passion, gifts, and resources. Just think of all the good God can do through HSLC!

One of the things I am pausing to pray about for 2026 is how to lead and be your pastor as we continue to live into the shift from being staff-led to being congregation-led. More and more responsibility and authority is being entrusted to committees who take the lead. Committees listen to the Holy Spirit and decide with prayer what to focus on and do, communicate with council and the congregation, and invite others to participate. Staff serves as resource, support, and encouragement. This culture shift has been emerging for years and is still in the process of becoming. Moving more fully into a congregation-led ministry model frees us for a whole new world of possibilities. It also means growing pains as we learn new ways to communicate, make decisions, and get things done in a faithful, wise, and God-pleasing way.

What an adventure! I am glad to be on it with you. I am so grateful for Lori and Darian – our office staff is highly collaborative and has an incredible ability to "get things done!"

I am so thankful that God called Jerome and me here to serve with you, the wonderful people of HSLC!

With gratitude,  
Pastor Liz Bell

## Pastor's Discretionary Fund

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is provided for ministry in unexpected circumstances or emergency situations that are not otherwise planned for within our congregational budget. It takes a high degree of discernment in such situations and we appreciate the availability of these funds to meet the needs of our wider community. While we often cannot disclose specifics on the fund's use, we can say that they are very much appreciated by those who receive them.

In 2025, \$160 was used from this fund. \$120 was used to support the cost of medication for a friend of Holy Spirit who is here on a foreign worker's permit.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this fund. In our own lives we all know that extra expenses can come up quickly. To have such a fund supported by the Holy Spirit community means we can make a meaningful difference in someone's life in a time of urgency.

With gratitude,  
Pastor Liz and Lori Zeiner

## CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

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Congregational Council currently has 7 returning members and 2 staff members.

Our Constitution stipulates we require a council of 10 - 18 members.

Nominations from the floor are invited and encouraged.

### Church Council 2025

Karen Oko	President & Communications Committee
Sara Dorow	Vice-President & Administration Committee
Belynda Kelleher	Treasurer & Financial Secretary
Arvid Pederson	Secretary & Administration Committee
Christopher Schneider	Stewardship & Ministry Committees
Paul Thomsen	Community Engagement Committee
Kathryn Elford	Lifelong Learning Committee
Margie Nunweiler	Worship & Community Engagement Committees
Carola Unsworth	Worship & Lifelong Learning Committees
Lori Zeiner	Office Administrator
Pastor Liz Bell	

Council wishes to thank Paul Thomsen who is stepping down from council after completing two three-year terms and to Christopher Schneider who is stepping down from council to concentrate on his studies.

Council is pleased to welcome Kathy Kwasnitza who has agreed to join Council this coming term.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

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Holy Spirit finished 2025 with a surplus of \$8,699, which brings our total accumulated deficit of **-\$5,981** to a surplus of **\$2,718**. Thank you for your financial support this year. Every offering, no matter the amount, helped to disappear our deficit.

Through 2025, apart from a couple of months, our income and expenses were close to equal. [At the beginning of 2024, we were in financial crisis, this was just 2 years ago!] Holy Spirit has come a long way from March of 2024.

On March 1, 2026, our mortgage will be renewed. The amount left owing on the mortgage is \$153,999 and, at time of printing/publication, there is \$45,342 from the Mortgage to Ministry campaign to pay down that amount.

Designated offerings to this campaign will be accepted until February 15, 2026.

If you would like to sign up for the Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) program, set up a credit card donation, or change your monthly remittance, you can do so by contacting Lori in the office or check out our donation options on our website; How to Donate | Holy Spirit Lutheran Church.

Thank you for your continued stewardship in our ministries at Holy Spirit.

Submitted by Belynda Kelleher,  
Treasurer

## 2025 Income Statement and Balance Sheet

### Income Statement December 31, 2025

1	Budget Income	\$321,739	<b>Designated Income</b>	\$17,816
2	Rental Income	\$56,440	Internal	\$11,513
3	<b>Total Income</b>	\$378,179	External	\$6,304
4				
5	<b>Budget Expenses</b>		<b>Designated Paid</b>	\$16,078
6	Worship	\$24,239	Internal	\$11,513
7	Witness	\$3,206	External	\$4,566
8	Staff	\$220,793		
9	Education	\$3,245	<b>Designated Surplus</b>	*\$1,738
10	Property	\$67,051		
11	Service	\$41,300	<b>Current Surplus</b>	\$10,437
12	Support	\$9,646		
13	<b>Total</b>	\$369,480		
14				
15	<b>Net Budget Income</b>	\$8,699		

\*Designated surplus on the income statement is expected to equal zero, since all external designated donations are paid to the external agencies at year end, and all internal designated surpluses are transferred to the balance sheet as "payable items". See the Cash Flow from Operating Activities to examine the change in internal designated funds, which are listed as "payable". \$1,738 Designated Surplus is due to current year income, net of expenses, earned in the Endowment fund.

### Balance Sheet December 31, 2025

16	<b>Current Assets</b>		<b>Liability</b>	
17	Petty Cash – General	\$200	<b>Designated Gifts Payable</b>	
18	Short Term Investment	-	Designated Gifts – Internal	\$75,980
19	Bank Operating – CIBC	\$28,476	Designated Gifts – External	-
20	Refugee Trust Account	-		
21	CEWS Income	-	<b>Total Gifts Payable</b>	
22	GST Paid & Receivable	\$808	Total Accounts Payable	-
23	Donations Receivable	\$11,129	Total Emp Remissions Payable	\$1,064
24	<b>Total Current Assets</b>	\$40,612	<b>Long-Term Debt</b>	
25			Mortgage Payable	\$154,958
26			Government Loan Payable	-
27	<b>Fixed Assets</b>		Damage Deposit Payable	\$3,000
28	Fixed Assets	\$1	<b>Total Long-Term Debt</b>	\$157,958
29	Undesignated Savings	-		
30	Reserve Funds	-	<b>Total Liability</b>	\$235,002
31	Endowment Fund	\$20,352	<b>Equity</b>	
32	<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	\$20,353	<b>Surplus</b>	
33			Accumulated Surplus	-\$184,473
34	<b>Total Assets</b>	\$60,966	Current Surplus	\$10,437
35			<b>Total Surplus</b>	-\$174,036
36				
37			<b>Total Equity</b>	-\$174,036
38				
39			<b>Liabilities and Equity</b>	\$60,966



<b>Cash Flow from Operating Activities</b>		
40	Net Income (loss)	\$10,437
<b>Adjustments to reconcile net income to cash provided by operating activities (Decrease) Increase in operating assets</b>		
41	Refugee Trust Account	\$0
42	CEWS Income Receivable	\$0
43	GST Paid and Receivable	\$12
44	Donations Receivable	(\$6,372)
45	Reserve Fund	\$0
46	Endowment Fund	(\$2,738)
<b>Increase in Operating Liabilities</b>		
47	Mortgage Reduction Payable	\$17,580
48	Renovation Fund Payable	\$0
49	Book Registry Payable	\$0
50	HSLC Endowment Grant Payable	\$257
51	Memorial Fund Payable	\$0
52	Altar Guild Fund Payable	\$0
53	Advertising Fund Payable	(\$2,504)
54	Library Payable	\$0
55	Children's Ministry Payable	\$0
56	Youth Projects Payable	\$567
57	FLIP-YngAdultLeadership Payable	\$0
58	Parish Pantry Payable	\$275
59	Pastor's Discretionary Fund	(\$160)
60	Other Gifts Payable	\$0
61	Wind Power Payable	\$0
62	Fitness Fund Payable	\$0
63	Refugee Fund Payable	\$150
64	Social Justice Payable	(\$1,193)
65	Table Fund Payable	\$0
66	Accrued Liabilities	\$0
67	Employee Remissions Payable	\$74
68	ELCIC Continuing Education	\$0
69	ELCIC Insurance Payable	(\$10)
70	Mortgage Payable	(\$12,812)
71	Government Loan	\$0
72	Damage Deposit	\$0
73	<b>Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities</b>	<b>\$3,583</b>
74	<b>Increase (Decrease) in Cash</b>	<b>\$3,583</b>
75	<b>Cash at Beginning of Period</b>	<b>\$24,903</b>
76	<b>Cash at End of Period</b>	<b>\$28,476</b>

<b>Designated Income Report (All funds have been forwarded)</b>		
77	Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$1,315
78	CLWR General	\$1,480
79	CLWR Lake Chad	\$1,251
80	Campus Food Bank – Edmonton	\$0
81	On Eagles’ Wings	\$0
82	Mulhurst Lutheran Camp	\$200
83	Kuriakos Camp	\$320
84	Edmonton’s Gleaners Association	\$0
85	Bent Arrow Healing Society	\$0
86	Endowment Fund Interest Income	<u>\$1,738</u>
87	<b>Total External Designated Gifts Received and Paid</b>	<b><u>\$6,304</u></b>

<b>Internal Payable Balance Report (These amounts are available for program spending)</b>		
88	Mortgage Reduction Payable	\$17,617
89	Renovation Fund	\$571
90	Book Registry	\$115
91	HSLC Endowment Grant	\$759
92	Memorial Fund	\$13,500
93	Altar Guild	\$1,217
94	Advertising	\$0
95	Library	\$252
96	Children’s Ministry	\$1,416
97	Youth (Projects)	\$1,007
98	Parish Pantry	\$10,453
99	Pastor’s Discretionary Fund	\$3,795
100	Other Gifts	\$401
101	Fitness Program	\$666
102	Refugee Fund	\$22,500
103	Social Justice	<u>\$1,709</u>
104	<b>Total Designated Gifts - Internal</b>	<b><u>\$75,980</u></b>



# MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

	Baptized	Confirmed
<b>1. Membership as of December 31, 2024</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>2. New members received during 2025</b>		
a. By baptism: children	0	
b. By baptism: adults	0	0
c. By affirmation of faith from responsibility / adherent list	3	3
d. By transfer from ELCIC member congregations	0	0
e. By transfer/affirmation of faith from Ang or other congregations	0	0
f. By affirmation of faith from non-Lutheran congregations	0	0
g. Statistical adjustment	0	0
<b>Subtotal: Total members received 2025</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Members affirmed their baptism thru confirmation in 2025</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>4. Members removed during 2025</b>		
a. By death	2	2
b. By transfer to other ELCIC congregations	5	3
c. By transfer to other Lutheran or Anglican congregations	0	0
d. To non-Lutheran congregations	0	0
e. To responsibility list & dropped (inactive)	4	4
f. Statistical adjustment	0	0
<b>Subtotal: Members removed during 2025</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. TOTAL membership December 31, 2025</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>364<sup>1</sup></b>

a. Total number of in-person Sunday worship services during the year	52
b. Total number of weekday worship services during the year	9
c. Total number of services with Holy Communion	40
d. Average number in-person attendance at Sunday worship	73
e. Average number of Sunday worship views on YouTube	48

*Note: This number reflects raw viewership data from YouTube and does not account for multiple viewings or multiple persons watching one screen.*

f. YouTube Subscribers:	
326 as of January 2026	
306 as of January 2025	
278 as of January 2024	
242 as of January 2023	
220 as of January 2022	
g. Funerals	0
h. Weddings	1
i. Baptisms	0

## \*Average weekly attendance/views for previous years:

2024	75 in-person, 60 online
2023	70 in-person, 60 online
2022	40 in-person, 83 online
2021	24 in-person (based on 22 in-person services) 108 online (average weekly YouTube views)
2020	91 in-person (based on 11 in-person services) 154 online (based on 41 online services)

## Historic in-person attendance:

2019 - 107	2014 - 162
2018 - 108	2013 - 164
2017 - 119	2012 - 170
2016 - 146	2011 - 195
2015 - 157	2010 - 193

\*calculation based on regular Sunday services, excluding Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and additional weekday services.

<sup>1</sup> The number of confirmed members is included in the number of baptized, (i.e., of this congregation's 432 members, 364 are confirmed.

# STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

## ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Administration Committee is charged with “keeping the wheels on the bus.” We are an active and engaged group, often working behind the scenes. Included under the umbrella of Administration is the Property Committee, Community Garden, and the new Accessibility Team (with separate reports for each below).

In 2025, we undertook a variety of activities, policies, and decisions:

- Created and hired for the *new administrative and communications assistant* position.
- Completed a review of the *HSLC Constitution* to bring it up to date in comparison with the National Synod model constitution. In the coming year, we plan to engage the congregation in conversation about several of the key possible changes to the constitution.
- Worked with Council and the Stewardship Committee to implement some of the recommendations of the Financial Planning task force, notably, *Disappear the Deficit* and the *Mortgage to Ministry* campaign.
- Regularly reviewed *rental and user groups* at Holy Spirit, including Edmonton Region Child Care

Association (ERCCA), Al-Anon, Ostomy Canada Support Group, ESL, Myeloma Alberta Support Society, UnLeesh Kickboxing, Royal Conservatory of Music, Malmo Community League, and the ICAN Seniors Association. Considered proposals from new user groups, such as Scouts Canada.

- Reviewed and updated our database of *policies*, and *developed or updated policies* around the endowment fund, equipment for staff, privacy and security, petitions, and RIC-aligned donations.
- Reviewed applications for the *HSLC Community Fund* and approved funding for two proposals--both projects will happen in 2026.
- Applied for the Canada Summer Jobs Grant (federal government grant).

We welcome new members! Just let any of us know if you would like to be engaged in this important work for our church. (We might have “administration” in our name, but we do have fun.)

Respectfully submitted,  
Brent A, Sara Dorow (Chair), Belynda Kelleher,  
Karen Oko, Ellen P, Arvid Pederson,  
and Lori Zeiner (ex officio)  
Administration Committee

## Accessibility Team

The Accessibility Team started the year by honing a list of ways in which we can make our spaces and activities at Holy Spirit more accessible to a wide range of people. We researched various options for opening up mobility pathways (e.g. where physical mobility is tight or unwieldy), aiding people with sensory and hearing needs, and creating more welcoming seating. In fall 2025, a federal grant opportunity opened up, so we turned our energies to applying for funding to make our

church more accessible for the wider community. In 2026 we will focus on conducting a formal accessibility audit of our space, developing congregational learning about accessibility, and beginning to implement key items on our list.

We would love to hear from anyone who has a passion for and/or knowledge about accessibility.

Chris Schneider, Sandra T, Tom d, and Sara Dorow.

## Property Committee Report

2025 passed with no major disruptions/repairs; however, we know that the roof will need repairs in 2026. There is leakage from time to time in the church interior.

The building interior and exterior have been maintained in terms of day-to-day operations and some other less frequent maintenance activities.

A spring and fall clean-up of the church yard and interior was held with the help of “Many Hands” and thanks to all that participated.

Parking lot lines were painted this year, hedges trimmed and grass mowed.

Thanks to all that help with this.

Snow clearing for this upcoming winter has been planned by several members of the congregation. This is an item that will need to be reviewed in the future in terms of engaging a firm to do this work.

The Daycare has noted maintenance items that need to be completed with the assistance of Lori as a central point of communication.

Other items that are on-going for consideration are adding security lighting on the west end of the church, replacement of the exterior lettering, whether to revert from rock beds to grass.

Upkeep is critical to provide a viable place for the congregation to meet on Sundays and many other activities throughout the week.

HSLC supports many outside groups such as the Daycare and other groups that task our building but also provide a stream of income for us.

Thanks to all that provide service for this type of ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Arvid Pederson

## Community Garden Report

2025 was a busy and exciting year for the Community Garden. We successfully replaced all the existing beds with more accessible, taller raised beds. The new layout of the garden has improved access to the beds, the movement between beds, and reduced water demands. The old, wooden boxes contributed to some of the "fill" for the new deeper beds and were put to other uses. We were able to relocate most of the perennials which are thriving in sunnier new locations. A grant from Charitus helped us to do this without the need for fundraising or depleting all our funds.

The veggies loved their new home! Everything grew profusely and with abundance. Our grapes buddies did an excellent job taming the vines and we look forward to some day making juice or perhaps wine?

The Community Garden continued to be a space of service and ministry. A number of groups requested gardens this year welcoming new people to the community. The Chinese seniors group planted and cared for two gardens, donating all the produce gathered directly to individuals facing food insecurity. The gift of fresh, organic vegetables was so appreciated.

A resettled refugee traveled regularly to the garden to care for his plot and shared his gift for growing by contributing to and nurturing the perennial flower bed. He shared his produce with other newcomers. He said "growing is a good way to deal with all the trauma" and said he wants more friends to join him next year. The

daycare enjoyed the excitement of the garden renos, each day asking questions of why and how of volunteers. Eventually the kiddos had the joy of planting their own bed, feeling the soil between their fingers and learning about the importance of insects and rain and worms. They got to pick fresh veggies and eat them off the vine. The Community Garden also continued to provide an opening for new conversations. Not a visit went by without someone walking by and pausing to chat. It is a third space where seeds of all sorts can be planted.

Expect more improvements in 2026. New composters are currently under construction and in the spring crush and mulch will be ordered and laid out for pathways. Have your shovels ready! Over the next few years we will continue to expand perennials that support bees, or have culinary uses and perhaps slowly replace and add to our orchard.

We are so thankful to all those who have contributed to the garden over the years, sharing their gifts of time, knowledge, materials, encouragement and prayers and ask that you share this ministry with friends and family.

*"Action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal, it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us."*

Robin Wall Kimmerer, [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants](#)

Blessings,  
Wanda C

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

### 2025 Highlights

- completion of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) contract
- collaborating with the Community Engagement Committee in support of the Christmas Market
- working with the Collaborative Partnership Committee in support of the Lutheran Choir Festival
- finalizing plans to redevelop our three-minute invitational video to focus on Pastor Liz

### Introduction

Communications is one of the newer committees of Council. Our committee understands itself as a vessel, one among many at Holy Spirit, to help grow our community, our faith and our ministries. While the role of the committee is still evolving, our function is currently twofold: to manage the overall direction of communications at HSLC, with particular reference to Holy Spirit's move online in recent years; and to support the communication needs of Council and its committees. If our role as a committee is still evolving, so is our membership. Over the summer we lost three members of our committee, Reis C, Eric D, and Kevin Z, but gained two: Karen O and Pastor Liz. The real highlight this year has been working with two such dedicated and

thoughtful groups of people. As you will see below, we accomplished a great deal this year. If you've seen new people at our services, the Communications Committee would like to think we have played a small part in getting the word out about Holy Spirit.

### Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Contract

2025 proved another very busy year. In the summer of 2024, with Council approval, the Communications Committee negotiated an SEO contract with Yellow Pages. In the digital world in which we now live, when people search for a new church, they begin their search online. The purpose of SEO is to ensure that when people search for a church using a specified number of terms (e.g. "Lutheran church Edmonton," "LGBTQ church Edmonton") HSLC would rank at, or very near, the top of their search results. When the contract ended in June, we decided not to renew it.

### Getting the Word Out About the Christmas Market and the Lutheran Choir Festival

Why? Because the SEO contract had improved our ranking in search results and we wanted to focus on another key tactical goal: creating more consistent and informative posts on our social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram) that convey who we are as a

faith group and that invite people to join us. To that end, Communications worked closely with the Community Engagement Committee to develop a marketing plan for Holy Spirit's third annual Christmas Market. Among other things, the plan involved developing three videos that were boosted through paid ads (a missional experiment we began last year). Through the hard work of Community Engagement's dedicated team, led by Paul T and Margie N, the Christmas Market more than doubled its attendance this year.

Once we learned that Holy Spirit had agreed to host the Lutheran Choir Festival this year, we were happy to work with the Collaborative Partnership committee, itself another new committee, to advertise the event. Given little lead time, however, we were unable to develop videos for this event. The Lutheran Choir Festival was held at Holy Spirit on October 26<sup>th</sup>, Reformation Sunday. The Choir Festival brought together six choirs from five Edmonton churches: Holy Spirit, Ascension, Trinity – both the German and English choirs – Hosanna and Glory. Through the hard work of all involved, particularly Wendy I and Jared S, the Lutheran Choir Festival proved a big success. It certainly was well attended.

#### **Our Tactical Plan for 2026**

In the final two months of 2025, the Communications Committee implemented its plan in support of Holy Spirit's Travelling Advent and Christmas Eve services,

which centred on an invitational video developed by Pastor Liz and Darian. We also finalized arrangements to have David Jacobs redevelop Holy Spirit's three-minute invitational video so that it focuses on our new Pastor and took the first steps in developing a longer-term social media strategy for Holy Spirit. As part of that work, we not only met with David Jacobs but also with several Lutherans who work in various aspects of Communication. This work led us to identify as Holy Spirit's target demographic women in their 20s and 30s and to develop an ambitious five-point Tactical Plan for 2026 (with a budget to match).

This plan centres on consistently posting video content to our social media accounts that addresses our target demographic and invites them to join our faith community. If we're successful in targeting this demographic, we will also need to begin rethinking aspects of our website and perhaps also our use of the YouTube channel. The good news here is that Holy Spirit is already a vibrant and welcoming community: we don't need to re-invent ourselves; we just need to get the word out. We want to communicate who we are, as a safe welcoming space, and what we do, through active, thoughtful ministry and stewardship. One key strand in this Tactical Plan is ongoing and sustained reflection on the social media experimentation in which we are engaged and on the social media strategy we are developing

Respectfully submitted,  
Communications Committee  
Paul Hjartarson, David U, Karen Oko

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

This last year, the Community Engagement Committee, with the help of the congregation, marched in the Edmonton Pride festival in August. We took time to create signs and show our acceptance and alliance with the pride community.

We helped organize Shrove Tuesday, Maundy Thursday, Travelling Lent and Advent activities.

We also helped in the facilitation of the Mother's Day to Father's Day toiletries and clothing drive. We received many donations and want to thank the congregation for their generosity. The toiletries from this spring campaign were donated to the Pregnancy Care Centre.

In June, we had our Annual Church Picnic. This was the third year at Gold Bar Park, the weather was beautiful, sunny and calm. Pastor Prema led the service in the park followed by visiting while children had a scavenger hunt and other activities.

During August/September we celebrated a farewell and thanks to Pastor Prema and a welcome to Pastor Liz.

The Christmas Market ran again for the fourth year. We had input and help from other committees: Lifelong

Learning Committee setup activities for children, Stewardship Committee ran the pricing and leadership of the bake sale, Communication Committee ran advertising in community newsletters and sponsored three promo videos for social media. We had over 400 participants and the socializing and interactions were memorable. It was nice to see people dropping in all day enjoying a coffee, participating in the market, and listening to the music provided for our enjoyment. We did some changes from the first three years and are always learning. Thanks to those who donated baking and for those helping with the selling of baked goods.

We hosted a Rally Sunday hotdog – picnic. We ended the year Sunday, December 28, with a "no meeting potluck" which was enjoyed by all who attended. Both events will be rebranded next year as we feel there was not the interest we had expected.

This coming year, we look forward to more social events and welcome any suggestions from our church family. Thanks to all who have supported and participated with the Community Engagement Committee this past year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paul Thomsen,  
Community Engagement Committee  
events@holyspiritlutheran.ca



## Food Bank Depot Report

Unfortunately, the Food Bank Depot at Holy Spirit continues to work hard. This year we distributed 26,746 kg of food to clients, 25 hampers at a time every Tuesday. Sadly, the need continues to grow and more people are turning to the Food Bank to help them make ends meet.

As always, special thanks to the amazing volunteers that come every Tuesday. If anyone wants to see us in action or volunteer, come join us or feel free to talk/text/phone me at 780-708-5025.

Sincerely, Carola Unsworth  
Food Bank Depot Coordinator

## Yesterday's Youth Report

Yesterday's Youth met 9 times on the first Wednesday of the month from February to June and September to December. The majority of the meetings were bring your own lunch with many members volunteering to do/organize presentations. The highlight was our September meeting when the program was 75 ICAN Seniors demonstrating all their activities. The year ended with a wonderful Christmas lunch in the church hall created for us by Thyme to Celebrate Catering.

The average attendance for the year was 30. We are looking for more volunteers to organize our monthly programs.

We wish to thank

- the volunteers for making the presentations happen
- Ellen P. for arranging our meetings
- Mary R. for helping to arrange our Christmas lunch
- our church office administrator who keeps us on track
- all our cheerful volunteers

Thank you all.

Submitted by Ellen P.

Yesterday's Youth Financial Summary			
1 January to 31 December 2025			
Opening Balances	Cash		\$323.70
	Chequing		\$1,805.49
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,129.19</b>
Income:	Catered Lunches	\$900.00	
	<b>Total Income</b>	\$900.00	
Expenses:	Caterer for Meals	\$963.00	
	Entertainment and Gifts	\$160.00	
	Coffee, Cookies and Supplies	\$185.00	
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$1,308.00	
	<b>Income Less Expenses</b>	-\$408.00	-\$408.00
			\$1,721.19
Closing Balances	Cash		\$84.95
	Chequing		\$1,636.24
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,721.19</b>

## LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Our small but mighty team had 9 meetings in 2025. Please consider joining us as we strive to support faith-based, educational programming for children and adults within our congregation.

We're blessed with our one-room-school-house Sunday School directed by Tanya G and a small roster of teachers. This year, Sunday School enjoyed two special lessons led by Pastor Prema in the spring and Pastor Liz in the fall. We continued to experiment with new ideas such as a Palm Sunday skit, an appeal for prayer buddies to support learners/teachers, providing a children's area during the Christmas Market, and forming an impromptu Advent choir. A special highlight was the annual Sunday School Advent/Christmas Program with about 11 children participating! The children had one major stewardship learning opportunity: the CLWR Friends of Creation Lake Chad project in December. VBC Camp had a hiatus this past year.

We continue to celebrate collaborative confirmation teaching among Holy Spirit, Trinity, St. John's and St. Paul's. Pastor Liz and Pastor Craig alternate teaching with five grade 8 students. No youth were confirmed in 2024.

We are thankful for Children's Time ministry with Belynda organizing its roster; adult educational

opportunities such as Yesterday's Youth and Ponder That. Thanks as well to Pastor Darryl and Jerome Bell for leading Thursday Bible Study.

On behalf of Holy Spirit, Wanda C attended a social justice "People's Forum" in Calgary in June. Eric, Margie, and Pastor Prema attended the National Convention. Finally, a 6-session "Bite-Sized Zoom Bible Study" was envisioned and prepped to run beginning this January.

"Ponder That" has continued to meet its goal of questioning, discussing and studying together as a group. During the first half of 2025, we invited different guests to share with us. Some of the topics we learned about were church planting, local ministries downtown, drug awareness, Grenada, and reconciliation with our indigenous sisters and brothers. We participated in the weekly Lenten and Advent services. In the fall of 2025, we have been using a DVD series, Animate Bible, to learn more about different aspects of the Bible. The group changes as all are welcome, and people come for what interests them." (submitted by Bonnie B)

May God direct and bless our community of teachers and learners in 2026.

Respectfully submitted by Kathryn Elford.  
Lifelong Learning Committee Chair

## MINISTRY COMMITTEE REPORT

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This has been a year of refocus and transition for the Ministry Committee. We have had to re-evaluate what the priorities are and change our mandate. We have decided to focus our work on showing God's love through connectedness and helping with giving a sense of belonging. We have given the focus on being a Caring Ministry.

The work we have continued to support is the Connect Care Team, who calls those who are homebound or unable to access online services. This continues to be a meaningful form of ministry for us and to those we contact.

We have implemented a follow up plan with new members. We sent out cards and spoke to the last group of new members to see how they are doing and feeling about Holy Spirit. We will encourage them to share their gifts as they feel able. For those we have contacted, this has been a positive plan. We will continue this with new members in the future. We hosted one new member Sunday in 2025 and another upcoming on Sunday Jan. 25, 2026

We have paused the small group ministry and will look into how new members could be part of this to connect with others in the congregation in the future. Our focus

being to help foster a sense of connectedness with small groups vs activities.

We organized the Giving Tree items and gifts this year for a refugee family we supported and also for the Boyle Street Center. Thank you to Petra and Rick S for delivering the items to Boyle Street. Thank you to the social worker with the Francophone Support Services who arranged and picked up the items for the refugee families. We thank all the members of Holy Spirit who gave towards this.

We have started planning for a Caring Ministry of supporting those who are ill, grieving or needing some support. This would involve adding people to the prayer list, sending cards, arranging a pastoral call or visit and possibly looking at providing some frozen meals in the future. This will be a major focus for the committee in 2026.

I want to thank the Ministry Committee for all their work and support this past year- Christopher Schneider (council liaison), Dorothea C and Dianne L. Thank you to Pastor Prema and Pastor Liz who both have been very helpful in guiding us through this transition of focus for this committee. We welcome anyone who feels they have the time to share their gifts and join our committee at any time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet A, Ministry Committee Chair

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

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At the beginning of 2025, the Stewardship Committee created an ambitious plan for our activities in the upcoming year, including completing the Disappear the Deficit goal, increasing church volunteers, and having 5 Stewardship Sundays throughout the year.

Disappear the Deficit was our primary campaign for this year. There was enthusiastic support for the campaign in the first months of the year. Over time, this initial success started to wane, and so, the Stewardship Committee reignited the initial goal in collaboration with Admin Committee, in a "Disappear the Deficit 2.0". Our mission was successful; the church ended this year with a surplus, wiping out our deficit. This will allow the church to support its ministries more, with lower interest and without as much debt overhead.

Partway through our plan for 5 Stewardship Sundays, we re-evaluated and made a choice to reduce to 3 in order to focus on Disappear the Deficit. The first, a Stewardship of Talents, highlighted members of our church and how they contribute with their God-given abilities. The second, a Stewardship of Treasures, exhibited the many volunteer opportunities in the church and invited congregants to put down their information to be contacted for any roles where they felt called. This allowed us to connect them with volunteer organizers, opening the doors to a larger volunteer network. The third Sunday, a Stewardship of Creation, tied church stewardship to stewardship of creation. These Sundays

served the purpose of educating the congregation about good stewardship.

In addition, Stewardship also participated in events around the church, notably running the Christmas Market's bake sale, organized by Community Engagement Committee, to raise money for the church (with the support of many indispensable volunteers). After the completion of Disappear the Deficit in November, our committee shifted focus to the new Mortgage to Ministry campaign, which will be conducted by a joint task force formed of Admin and Stewardship members.

In the upcoming year, Stewardship will continue to support the Mortgage to Ministry task force, provide stewardship education, and encourage giving. As we welcome a new chair, we are also searching for new members to bolster our small committee. We will be thinking about new ways to approach our mission, and welcome anyone interested in our work to join us in it.

Thank you to the members of the Stewardship Committee and all your unique ideas, to collaborating committees, and to all those who support our church through giving, service, and fellowship.

Respectively Submitted,  
Christopher Schneider,  
Stewardship Committee Chair

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Worship Committee have planned services, organized special services (i.e.: Truth & Reconciliation Sunday, Campus Ministry Sunday, etc.) liturgical art for Lent, Pentecost, Thanksgiving & Advent. Worked with Jared to plan choir performances and special music on Sundays. Was able to find roster co-ordinators for Sunday readers and kitchen staff. Lent and Advent kits were created for congregation and families to take home. Worship Committee organized Service of

Installation events for Pastor Liz Bell (Holy Spirit Lutheran Church) and Pastor Ellie McHan as Chaplain with Lutheran Campus Ministry – Edmonton.

Sharing of your time and talents are greatly appreciated. Thank you to everyone who had a part in making worship happen. We have done a lot in 2025 and will continue to do what we can in 2026 to make worship meaningful and inclusive for everyone.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margie Nunweiler, Worship Committee Chair

## BISHOP'S AGM LETTER TO CONGREGATIONS



January 2026

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus!

Across the Synod of Alberta and the Territories congregations will soon hold their annual meetings. While this may seem to be business as usual, these meetings are important ministry moments.

It's not an easy time to be the church. Old certainties no longer carry the assurance they once did. And yet, we are developing new ways to put faith into action.

Congregations are adapting! We are courageous partners with one another and the Holy Spirit.

Our Synod exists not as an institution hovering above congregations, but as an extension of our shared commission. Collaboration with the Synod and with one another is not an administrative obligation; it is a theological practice. It is one of the ways we live out our baptismal promise and participate in God's work of justice, compassion, and renewal. When we collaborate, we make room for gifts to circulate, for burdens to be shared, and for imagination to multiply. Thank you for your benevolence – gifts that enable administration of calls, training leaders, nurturing young people, guidance through conflict, and much more.

We are in an era calling us from a focus on self-sufficiency and survival, to big-hearted giving, partnership and trust. This is our hope for the future.

We give to ministries near and far because we understand that our tithes change lives. Luther encouraged us to be "curved out" (to be mindful of others, not just ourselves) because it teaches us to rely on God's provision. Our financial resources are for the good of all.

Church is created by and for relationship—with God, with one another, and with the world. As such, we are called to intentionally develop ways of working together that uphold accountability and mutual responsibility. In this time of change, trust for one another will be like the cement between our building blocks.

Partnership stretches us. It invites us beyond constraining patterns and deceptive independence. It asks us to trust that God is at work not only in our own context, but in the wider body to which we belong. In a culture that prizes self-sufficiency, choosing *interdependence* becomes a quiet, countercultural witness to the gospel.

These gestures may seem modest, but the Spirit has a long history of accomplishing much from humble beginnings: a few loaves, several fish, and willing hearts. As we move through this new year together, I invite your congregation to lean into a shared life. Pray for one another across regions.

Engage in synodical initiatives—not as obligations but as opportunities for connection. Let us know where you need help. Be curious, generous, and brave—together!

Thank you for your witness, your perseverance, and your willingness to walk this shared road. May the Spirit continue to shape us together for the sake of the world God loves.

In Christ,

*Bishop Trish Schmermund*

Rev. Trish Schmermund, Bishop  
Synod of Alberta and the Territories  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



# MULHURST CAMP REPORT

## Mulhurst Lutheran Church Camp Association

P.O. Box 78, Mulhurst Bay, Alberta T0C 2C0

[www.mulhurstcamp.ca](http://www.mulhurstcamp.ca)

### MULHURST 2025 - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

This has been quite the year. There have been many staff changes, as well as many capital improvements to the property.

**Staffing:** We hired a couple of people to fill in the role of office manager. They were not a good fit. In April, we hired Lisa Guse. She has done an excellent job since starting and I sincerely hope she will be with us for many years to come.

Carmen, as we all know, stepped away from the office manager role in June of 2024. She was then hired as our property and rental manager. Her expertise and knowledge of the camp have been a valuable resource for the camp this past year.

**Seasonals:** We have been trying to update some of the policies and practices regarding our seasonal campers as well as put into practice policies that are on the books but not always enforced. We are also trying to update other policies and practices so that we can facilitate our relationship with the seasonals in a more concise and consistent manner. One example is that the contracts for the seasonals could be signed in September for the following season, rather than in the spring. This helps us know who is staying well in advance so that if there is a turnover, we can work to fill the vacancies in a timely fashion over the winter months. It also allows the seasonals to have their site paid for by the start of camping season, which facilitates paying that cost in installments over the winter.

**Campers:** A similar task was taken on for the campers who use our camp sites over the summer. We have discussed at some length how to ensure that there is respect and adherence to the policies and practices of Mulhurst. We have also decided to implement a \$25 nonrefundable deposit when someone books a camp site. We have had too many cancellations come up at the last minute which have left our campsites vacant, without any

way of filling them. The hope is that the nonrefundable deposit will entice people to honor their booking.

**Property:** There have been a lot of improvements to Mulhurst over the last number of months, inclusive of new flooring in the main lodge, and a ramp with railings leading to our main entrance.

**Summer Program:** The summer program went well, at least from my perspective. We had an excellent staff for the most part. Our numbers were up, and I felt that we were able to provide campers with an experience of being part of a community brought together by God's love.

There were challenges. Although the staff was excellent, there were needs that arose from some of our campers that we felt we could not properly address. This will lead us to re-evaluate how we will construct our staff going forward. We also had a week where no camp happened. We had originally held that week open for a possible VBS, but that didn't materialize. The camp we chose to try didn't garner any interest, so the programming committee will have to reconstruct our summer program for next year with that in mind.

As mentioned above, the staff was excellent, but we were challenged with the cook. Our first cook didn't work out, and I was in the kitchen far more than I would have expected. Our second hire was much better, but we face the ongoing reality of ever-increasing food costs. For a little camp like ours, these mounting costs add up, and we need to take this into consideration as we look to the summer program of 2026.

Please keep us in your prayers for this following year as we continue to adjust and grow as directed by the Holy Spirit.

Submitted by Matt Lyseng  
Executive Director, Mulhurst Camp

## EDMONTON REGION CHILDCARE ASSOCIATION (ERCCA)



At the ERCCA Holy Spirit site, 2025 was filled with joyful moments and rich learning experiences. As we step into the new year, we remain dedicated to supporting and caring for our community. Our centre includes three classrooms serving children from 12 months to preschool age, offering a safe, engaging, and collaborative learning environment through our Junior, Toddler, and Preschool programs.

Our learning spaces are intentionally designed around children's interests and are inspired by the concept of loose parts. Play is at the heart of our daily curriculum and is thoughtfully integrated into all learning experiences. Through intentional planning, nurturing relationships, and child-led exploration, we encourage curiosity, creativity, and meaningful discovery.

Throughout the year, children and educators had many opportunities to explore the Holy Spirit neighborhood

and strengthen their connections within the community. The summer months were especially memorable, featuring exciting field trips, neighborhood walks, and lots of energetic play in our outdoor playground.

Our committed team, led by Director Laxmi/Jemina and Assistant Director Harpreet, works collaboratively and with a shared vision. We strongly believe that play is essential to how children understand their world, make meaning, and learn most effectively. ERCCA is proud to continue serving the Malmö community and looks forward to welcoming families to join us in monthly activities alongside our young learners. We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Holy Spirit Church for providing ERCCA with the opportunity to be part of such a supportive and nurturing environment.

We are grateful for this partnership.